

Message Text

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SUBJECT: LABOR CAUCUS RE-ELECTS FORMER MINISTRY, ADDING SENATOR

JOHN WHEELDON

REF: CANBERRA 3561

1. SUMMARY: LABOR PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS COMPLETED ELECTION OF MINISTRY

JUNE 10, FOLLOWING ELECTION OF LEADERS (REFTEL). ENTIRE FORMER MINISTRY RE-ELECTED WITH EXCEPTION OF A.J. GRASSBY, WHO WAS DEFEATED IN MAY 18 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. SENATOR JOHN WHEELDON (WESTERN AUSTRALIA) ELECTED TO REPLACE GRASSBY IN MINISTRY. ORDER OF ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF MINISTRY OF INTEREST AS REFLECTING ENHANCED STATUS IN VIEW OF CAUCUS. FIRST TO BE ELECTED AFTER LEADERS WAS REX CONNOR, MINISTER FOR MINERALS AND ENERGY. WHITLAM WILL ANNOUNCE PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENTS TODAY. FEW CHANGES EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING ELECTION OF LABOR PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP ON JUNE 10, REPORTED IN REFTEL, LABOR CAUCUS COMPLETED ELECTION OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LEADERS, UNANIMOUSLY RETURNING SENATOR D. R. WILLESEE TO HIS

PREVIOUS POST AS DEPUTY LEADER OF GOVERNMENT IN SENATE. CAUCUS THEN PROCEEDED TO RE-ELECT ENTIRE FORMER MINISTRY ELECTED IN 1972, ADDING SENATOR JOHN WHEELDON OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA TO REPLACE MR. A.J. GRASSBY, FORMER MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, WHO WAS DEFEATED IN MAY 18 ELECTIONS.

3. WHILE FORMER MINISTRY WAS RE-ELECTED, ORDER OF ELECTION WAS SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED, REFLECTING COLLECTIVE VIEW OF LABOR CAUCUS BOTH OF POPULARITY OF MINISTERS CONCERNED AS WELL AS, TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT, A VIEW OF HOW WELL THEY PERFORMED IN THEIR POSTS OVER PAST 18 MONTHS. LIST OF MINISTERS IN ORDER OF ELECTION FOLLOWS. WHEN WHITLAM DISTRIBUTES PORTFOLIOS TODAY (FEW CHANGES EXPECTED), THIS IS ORDER OF PRECEDENCE IN WHICH THEY WILL BE LISTED:

GOUGH WHITLAM, PARLIAMENTARY LEADER; DR. J.F. CAIRNS, DEPUTY PARLIAMENTARY LEADER; SENATOR LIONEL MURPHY, GOVERNMENT LEADER IN SENATE; SENATOR D.R. WILLESEE, DEPUTY GOVERNMENT LEADER IN SENATE; R.F.X. CONNOR; W.G. HAYDEN; FRANK CREAN; FREDERICK M. DALY; SENATOR DOUGLAS MCCLELLAND; LANCE BARNARD; SENATOR KENNETH WRIEDT; DR. REX PATTERSON; CLYDE R. CAMERON; KIM BEAZLEY; LIONEL BOWEN; SENATOR JOHN WHEELDON; THOMAS UREN; SENATOR REGINALD BISHOP; L.R. JOHNSON; C.K. JONES; DR. DOUGLAS EVERINGHAM; KEPPEL E. ENDERBY; GORDON M. BRYANT; DR. MOSES H. CASS; SENATOR J.L. CAVANAGH; WILLIAM L. MORRISON; FRANCIS STEWART.

4. REX CONNOR HAS GONE UP FROM EIGHTEENTH PLACE IN FORMER MINISTRY TO FIFTH PLACE. BARNARD DROPPED DOWN TO TENTH PLACE. TOM UREN DROPPED FROM THIRTEENTH TO SEVENTEENTH PLACE. CLYDE CAMERON STAYED IN ABOUT SAME PLACE (THIRTEENTH INSTEAD OF TWELFTH).

5. PRESS SPECULATES THAT WHITLAM WILL SIMPLY CONFIRM EXISTING MINISTRY IN THE PRESENT PORTFOLIOS, ASSIGNING IMMIGRATION TO SENATOR WHEELDON, THE ONLY NEW MEMBER. TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY MEAN A GENERAL RESHUFFLE OF CABINET, INVOLVING COMPLEX MANEUVERING AND, PERHAPS, INCURRING FURTHER FRICTION WITHIN ALP.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ELECTION OF CAIRNS AS DEPUTY LEADER (AND, THEREFORE, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER) AND ADDITION OF SENATOR WHEELDON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARE ONLY MAJOR NEW ELEMENTS IN MINISTRY, PRESS GENERALLY REGARDS CHANGE AS SHIFT TO LEFT OF POLITICAL SPECTRUM. CAIRNS' POLITICAL BACKGROUND HAS BEEN LEFT OF CENTER FOR MANY YEARS, AND SENATOR WHEELDON HAS FOLLOWED A SIMILAR COURSE, THOUGH HIS LEFTIST INVOLVEMENT IS MUCH LESS MARKED THAN THAT OF CAIRNS. EMBASSY WILL BE SUBMITTING BIOGRAPHIC EVALUATIONS OF BOTH MEN IN SEPTEL.

GREEN

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